

# Boys' and Girls' PAGE

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## PRANKS OF MISCHIEVERS

"For de land's sake!" muttered Mammy as she looked upon her newly baked cake, only half of which now remained. Yes, there it was, the same cake she had so carefully placed away in the cake box the night before; only now instead of an unbroken snowy expanse of white tinged with yellow from a crumbling rain. In fact, but one-half of the cake remained, and the rest looked as though an earthquake had struck it.



Then naturally she thought of the Jones children, and confident that they were the culprits, called them into the kitchen. There she carefully searched their countenances for traces of the cake, but telltale crumbs being visible

openly accused them of having helped themselves to the cake. This they stoutly denied with looks of such evident innocence that Mammy was puzzled.

"I guess it was them pestiferous little critters, them Mischievers again. They're allus doin' things like that, botherin' folks and spillin' things," she said, watching meantime for signs of guilt on the part of the children.

"Oh, tell us about the Mischel—what ever you call 'em," shouted little Bobby, seeing that she was in for it. Mammy, after carefully outlining a plot in her mind, proceeded:

"You know them Mischievers—just as big as one of your shooter marbles, hats coming to a point, and skinny legs and arms. You never saw one of course. Nobody did but me, and I come on 'em by accident one night. Well, anyway, they're allus stealin' things, and how they does it is the funnest way. I know just how they took the cake. They aint big enough to lift a knife and cut it, so they uses a piece of string, just like two men with a buckawh cuttin' down trees. They gets on each side of the cake and saws and saws and saws. When they cut off half they saw again till they get the pieces small enough to carry off and eat 'em."

The eyes of the children were now so wide open with wonder at the tale of the little Mischievers that Mammy was puzzled about the theft of the cake. Just then Mrs. Jones entered the kitchen and seeing the remains of the cake on the table exclaimed:

"Oh, Mammy, that cake was delicious! Mr. Jones and I had some last night, because we did not have time to get supper after the show. I came out here in the dark, and after I had cut off some pieces the rest of it fell on the floor."

A cry of delight broke from the children at their vindication, and they shamed Mammy into gruffness by calling her a "make-believer," and insisted that there were no such things as Mischievers.



SO HUNGRY WAS BESSIE.

Oh, so hungry was little Bessie. She really wasn't, you know, but she honestly thought she was. She had eaten very heartily at supper—had lots of nice things. There were her favorite apple dumplings and, to crown everything, she had been helped to two plates of ice cream.

She had for all that looked longingly at the good things left on the table. Her father had noticed the look and had merely smiled at mamma. But mamma kept a very severe expression on her face because she had again and again tried to instill in the mind of her little daughter of 7 years the benefit of leaving the table always with appetite sufficient to eat something additional with a relish.

"I always do leave the table feeling that I could eat something more," said Bessie one time when there were guests at the house, and she wondered why everybody smiled at her sally.

There wasn't a particle of doubt this night, however, that Bessie went away from the table feeling that she could eat a great deal more. When her mother kissed her good night after she had heard her say prayers she supposed her little daughter would soon be in dreamland. Nothing of the kind happened—at least just then.

Bessie waited and waited. She couldn't go to sleep. She felt convinced that she was too hungry to sleep and she tossed and tossed and waited. By and by she heard papa closing the doors and windows and mamma coming up the stairs.

Justly soon she heard her father and mother preparing to go to bed. She listened very attentively. By and by she saw their light turned out. Then she waited quite patiently because she knew she would soon have an opportunity to carry out her resolve.

And what do you think her resolve was? Why nothing more or less than to get something more to eat. Now what do you think of that? And she had had a real good supper—all that a little girl really needs at any time.

Bessie waited five minutes, six minutes, and finally ten minutes. Then she very, very quietly got out of bed. The moonlight shone through the window and the beams played on a little girl in her nightgown who thought she was very hungry and was determined to appease her appetite.

Down stairs softly Bessie went. Not a sound did she make at all. She reached the dining room. Then she felt her way in the dark along the hall to the kitchen. For a minute she paused and felt that she had better go back. She was getting a little afraid of the dark and she would have gone back again, only—as I have told you before—she thought she was very hungry.

So she reached up on the shelf where she knew the matches were kept and lit one. Then she lit the gas and turned on the ice box. She paused again, because she thought she heard a noise in her mother's room. She remembered that a very bad man in a mask had broken into the house next door only a few weeks before and that almost everybody near by had been in a state of fear.

While she was thinking this over her glance turned again to the ice box. That

glance settled it. She was hungry, oh, so hungry, and it made no difference about burglars so long as they were not in plain sight.

So Bessie went to the ice box. What do you suppose was the first thing that she let her gaze rest upon. Why, nothing but a great big piece of mince pie. Think of it—a great big piece of mince pie!

There were other things that she might have looked at and longed for—even though she was not really hungry—but for some reason that great big piece of mince pie was a fascination.

Bessie reached out and seized the pie. Then she turned out the gas and slipped up stairs as quietly as a mouse, carrying the great big piece of mince pie in her hand all through the dark journey to her little bedroom. Finally she reached her room, and closing the door softly she got under the bed-clothes and began to eat the mince pie.

When the elephant came into Bessie's bedroom she was awfully afraid, but only for a little moment. Then he came right through the window, just as though he walked on down from the big man in the moon who smiled so far away up in the night sky.

First he waved his trunk over Bessie's bed and then he waved his tail. He swayed back and forth just like you have seen them in the zoo. Bessie felt like screaming out for her papa, but she found she couldn't get her voice. All she could do was to stare at the elephant.

Suddenly the elephant began to talk. It may seem strange to you to think that an elephant can talk, but under some circumstances they certainly can do so. And this elephant was in the middle of one of the circumstances. Said he in his trumpet voice:

"Bessie, give me something to eat and give it to me quickly. I broke out of the zoo this afternoon and now I am sorry for it. They always gave me enough to eat here, but I never was satisfied. So I broke out this afternoon and I am searching for more food. And now I want you to give me some. You ought to have plenty of it here. They tell me there is always plenty on your table."

"Please, Mr. Elephant," asked Bessie timidly, "what kind of food do you eat?" "I'm not so afraid of you as I was, for now I remember I must have seen you at the zoo many, many times. I don't recall what sort of food you ate there," answered the elephant in a gruff way. "Never mind what sort, I left because of the old sort. I want something entirely new. Yes, sir; I want something entirely new."

"Well, what may that be, Mr. Elephant?" questioned Bessie, and she was so eager to please the big fellow and so not get hurt that she rose up in bed and held out her hands to him imploringly.

"Oh! It's just this: I've got to have some mince pie; I must have mince pie. If I don't get a great big piece of mince pie I'll make trouble for the whole neighborhood, and I'll start here in this house. Be lively now, Bessie; bring the mince pie."

"But, Mr. Elephant, I am pretty sure there is no mince pie in our house. In fact I am quite positive there is none."

"You are positive. How can you be so positive? Are you in charge of the mince pie?"

"No, but—Mr. Elephant, don't look so fierce—I know there is not a single piece of mince pie in the house."

"Not a single piece? What makes you so sure, Miss Bessie?"

"Well, I—I, well, Mr. Elephant; why—just then the elephant glanced down on the bedclothes. And didn't he get angry? Well, you just better guess he did. What do you think he saw? Why nothing more or less than a great big heap of pie crust crumbs.

"So that is why you know there is no more mince pie?" he said in a loud voice. "So you ate the mince pie, eh?"

"Why do you say I ate it?" asked Bessie, very much frightened.

"There are the crumbs; you must have eaten it."

"Yes; but you say it is mince pie crumbs. I don't see how you know."

"I know mince pie crust crumbs when I see them. I know pumpkin pie crust crumbs when I see them. You can't fool me, because I have been in the zoo too long. Now let me tell you, just for eating that piece of pie that I wanted I'll—"

And when they asked Bessie afterward for more particulars about why she screamed until mamma got up she will always tell you that the last she remembered was seeing the big zoo elephant swinging his trunk and his tail, the end of each having a great big piece of mince pie tied on with ivory safety pins.

THE ROSE.

"Why, Emily darling, how sweet and dear of you to bring me all those pretty roses and the honeysuckle with them makes the bouquet smell so sweet."

"Mamma sent them to you, and she says I may stay with you this afternoon if you invite me."

"Why, of course I want my little Emily, come and sit beside me on the porch swing, and I will tell you the story a rose bush always tells to all who pass that way."

"It was such a beautiful rose, the first of all its brothers to open its petals to be kissed by the sun. It was happy, for it knew it was beautiful, as leaf by leaf it opened to the kind sun's rays. Then deep in its heart gleamed as a diamond a crystal drop of dew."

"Now it was late in the morning and the lady who owned the garden came out for a walk. Her heart throbbled with delight when she saw the rose, and looking up to heaven she silently gave thanks for the beauty all around her."

"But all she said to the friend who was with her was 'Look, Mabel, what a beautiful rose.' For she knew her friend, being of another mind, would not understand the pleasure a thing of beauty gave her."

"The little rose, who knew her thoughts, was very happy. But its joy was soon dashed, for Mabel answered, 'I know, dear, you love roses, but I far prefer the honeysuckle growing near it. The perfume is stronger and I think the feathery little yellow white flowers against their dark green leaves much prettier.'"

"Ah! how sad was the little rose on hearing these unkind words. But the lady, when her friend was not looking, kissed the little rose and bade it not to feel unhappy, for nearly everyone in the whole world agreed with her that it was the most beautiful and fragrant of flowers."

"Toward evening, just as the little rose was nodding and deciding it was bedtime, the beautiful lady in a long white trailing gown came out to walk in her garden."

"And when she came to the rose bush she laid her hot cheek against the little rose and kissed it, causing it to open all its little petals with the warmth of her breath."

"I have a secret for you, pretty one," she said, "my lover is coming back to-night from beyond the seas. Many, many days have I awaited his return, but at last he is coming. Sweet rose, will you lend me the beauty of your presence that I may look more beautiful in his sight?"

"How glad the little rose was. Could life hold anything more precious? That it might be with the beautiful lady in her hour of happiness."

"How happy it was when the lady gathered it with her own fair hands and placed it on her breast in the folds of her soft white gown."

Just then the doorbell tinkled in the distance and the rose could feel her heart beat as she whispered, "It is he."

Then a deep, rich voice called through the twilight. "Where art thou, my love's desire? Oh, lady beautiful, where have you hidden yourself?"

While the lady laughingly stretched out her hands in greeting to the handsome stranger. But the little rose felt her heart throb more and more.

"What a beautiful night it is," the deep rich voice continued. "My car is at the door, suppose we go for a little ride? Don't put on your hat," he said. "I will wrap this soft scarf around your shoulders, and we will drive very slowly."

The little rose had by now gone fast asleep, when it was awakened by a terrible crash, a rending of wood. The heart over which he lay was quite still. The beautiful lady was dead.

There was a great hubbub all around and the little rose made out that the people in the other auto had not noticed them in the dark.

The owner of the machine that had run into them called out anxiously. "How are they doctored? Any chance for either of them?"

"Nothing to be done for the lady," he answered. "The man's heart still beats, but I doubt whether he lives until we can get to the nearest house."

So they gently lifted them into the car and drove swiftly to the home of the beautiful lady, which was the nearest place. Ah! what a sad homecoming. They laid them side by side. For the doctor's words proved only too true. The lover was dead also.

When they buried the beautiful lady her friend said, "What shall we do with this rose on her breast?"

And others said, "Let us place it on the grave, for she loved flowers."

So they did, and the rose took root and in time became a large bush, holding many pretty roses, and as each one opened its petals to the sun the rose bush told the sad story of the beautiful lady and her old fashioned garden.

## SOAP BUBBLE AND POP CORN.

Once there was an old woman who lived in a pipe and her name was Mrs. Soap Bubble.

She had ever so many children, and it always made her sad to think of them, because just when she began to love them the most they left her.

You see it was like this. Mrs. Soap Bubble would dwell in her little pipe home, minding her own business and hoping that everybody else on earth was doing the same. Suddenly—every now and then—there would come a regular storm. You might call it a hurricane or a tornado. The sailors call these big windstorms by those names, and you can rest assured that they were no fiercer than the storm that used to come whirling into the pipe now and then.

At these times Mrs. Soap Bubble would be very much worried and put about because she did not know but every minute was her last. She would try to shrink herself into the smallest possible space in the pipe home, so as to escape the tempest and hope by making herself small and insignificant the flurry would pass her by.

Despite several adverse experiences she never gave up confidence that when the next storm came along she would be able by dwindling herself into a very close compass to escape the dire effects. She planned, and schemed to get into a new corner of the pipe and how to cling to the sides when the winds roared the loudest. Several times she had been on the verge of losing her hold on her home—swaying back and forth lighter than a feather.

As much as she imagined, her anxiety about the big winds was increased when she had her children about her. It was hard enough task to grip the pipe home sides for her own protection, but when the children were about it was tenfold more difficult. And to make it worse the children seemed only too eager to get away from their mother's house. Many times Mrs. Soap Bubble snuggled close to them and sought her very hardest to detain them, but they would bob and dance out of her grasp and finally break away and soar off on the wings of the tempest.

Well, it was just at one of these storm times when Mrs. Soap Bubble was asleep in the pipe house with six of her little children cuddling alone side of her—they were very, very little children and so light and airy looking that you would have had to admire them, although they were no bigger than a peach pit at this very time.

It was at a moment when Mrs. Soap Bubble felt most secure. She was in a fluttering doze. A little boy came into the kitchen and reached up into the pipe shelf where the pipe house was located and lifted the house and Mrs. Soap Bubble and all the six little Soap Bubbles down to the kitchen table.

Then he drew a cup full of hot water. And then he got a piece of soap. And then he put the piece of soap down in the cup of hot water.

Mrs. Soap Bubble had been awakened by the time she was removed from the kitchen shelf. She had had so much experience that she knew very well that a storm was coming. She tried to get a firmer hold on the side of the pipe. Whispering to her children in order to give them confidence she used this purposeful, disdainful style:

"Don't mind what's going on, children! Don't get swelled up with curiosity. This boy who has lifted our home out of the kitchen shelf is only what they call a blower. When you get older you will know what a blower

here again and takes my home from the shelf that I will not have strength enough to hold on. I just know I will not. And I don't know what to do. If I were only a solid person, but I am only a bubble."

While Mrs. Soap Bubble was talking she heard a strange sort of crackling sound in the closet near her pipe home. She shrank even into smaller space than she was, fearing that it might be the boy again, who was determined upon setting up another storm.

But after quite a pause she could see no sign of the young storm and just when she was about to consider that her fears were very foolish she heard the crackling sound again. She hardly dared to breathe, although her bubble sides heaved back and forth as though she had a bad case of heart failure. Then came a voice:

"How do you do, Mrs. Soap Bubble?" Mrs. Soap Bubble dared not answer. "I said how do you do, Mrs. Soap

Bubble?" came the voice once more. "Why don't you answer me?"

Mrs. Soap Bubble inclined a soapy gaze in the direction of the shelf just above where her pipe home was located. She thought she saw a round object—just exactly as round as herself—but could not make out exactly what it was in the dim light.

"I wish you would answer me," again came the voice. "I see you are in trouble and I may do you good."

This rather emboldened Mrs. Soap Bubble, and she plucked up sufficient courage to reply in a little wishywashty watery tone:

"I hear you, but I do not know who you are, and perhaps after all the peril I have gone through it would be safer not to know you any better."

"Oh, yes, it would, I can assure you. Here, now, just to show you you should have more confidence when a friendly offer is made I'll roll out of my way and take the risk of breaking when I drop from my shelf down to yours."

"Risk of breaking?" asked Mrs. Soap Bubble in surprise. "I can't make out what you mean. I know I might break very easily, but I didn't suppose there were any like me that I did not know about before this."

"Oh, I'm like you in shape and exact size—just a trifle smaller—but I don't break quite so easy. My name is Mr. Popcorn."

"I'm glad to hear of you, Mr. Popcorn," said Mrs. Soap Bubble. And then she added in quite a little fear: "Are you really coming down to visit me?"

"Yes," answered Mr. Popcorn. "But I'll have to take quite a drop as sure as my name is Mr. Pop. Here goes, though!"

In another instant Mrs. Soap Bubble heard the strange crackling and rolling, and then—bing—down from the shelf fell something that was red and round with little puffs all over it. Mrs. Soap Bubble gasped because the object rolled right up close to her pipe home and she thought for a second that the home would break in pieces and her life would be ended.

"Don't be afraid, Mrs. Soap Bubble," said Mr. Popcorn—for sure enough it was he. "Don't be afraid. I don't intend to do you any harm. I just like you. In fact when I've seen you during the last two or three storms I have been filled with great admiration for you. You really look so beautiful when the light shines through you. You see I haven't any such beautiful look. Nor have I ever had any children except those that were all solid like I am. I saw your children leave you, and I must say I couldn't make out how children could leave so beautifully a mother."

"Now do you know that Mrs. Soap Bubble rather swelled up in her pipe home—yes, almost as much as when she was blown up by the storms the Boy had started."

"Oh," she murmured. "It is nice to know you are appreciated, even though you are a Soap Bubble. I'm glad you like me. Yes, and I appreciate your sympathy in the loss of my children. Do you know that I have lost altogether through those storms nearly a thousand children?"

"Is it possible?" gasped Mr. Popcorn. "I never would have thought of it. I can hardly believe that children could be so ungrateful."

"Neither can I," said Mrs. Soap Bubble. "Still I don't know as I blame them. They may not have been so strong as I and it may have been harder to have held on."

There was quite a pause. Mrs. Soap Bubble remained half blown up so that she could look over the side of her pipe home, but Mr. Popcorn rolled a little closer.

"Do you know, Mrs. Soap Bubble," he said in gentle tones, "I think if we were to get married we would be very happy and I could protect you against the storms."

"Oh, dear me!" said Mrs. Soap Bubble. "Yes indeed," went on Mr. Popcorn. "And I have a great plan for your approval."

"Oh, my, I know nothing about plans," answered Mrs. Soap Bubble. "All I know about is how to hold on fast when there is a storm started by that dreadful Boy."

"That's just it," put in Mr. Popcorn eagerly. "Listen. You know how all of your children sprang from you when the Boy blew up the storm? You know how first one and then another and then another formed into bubble children on every side of you?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Soap Bubble apprehensively.

"Well, here is the plan. When the Boy starts a storm I'll roll right close to the bowl of your pipe home. When he blows you toward me like you did with your children. Then, you see, I'll roll right inside so that I'll be like a solid Soap Bubble. Then when the Boy blows his hardest you unloosen your hold on the pipe bowl and we'll soar away. Your bubble part will carry us away out through the window. My popcorn part will keep the wind from blowing through you and blowing you to pieces. Will you do it?"

Just as Mrs. Soap Bubble was uttering a faint "yes" they both heard steps descending the stairs into the kitchen. It was the Boy again. He came to the shelf.

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